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Letters to the Editor

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Future Of Communism

Editor, the SUN:

Too many Americans today live in the illusion that the Russians are becoming more like us, and therefore the Communist threat is diminishing. Specifically, their illusion is best expressed in erudite terms by George Kennan, who writes:

"In the main the goals and trends of Russian Communism lie along the same path as those of Western liberal industrialism . . . It is probable that the progress already made is in the direction of our own institutions."

Walt Rostow has described Communism as a "disease of the transition" to a highly industrialized society, and he predicts that Communism is "likely to wither" when the Soviet Union reaches the stage of advanced mass consumption.

The above conclusions of Kennan and Rostow are quoted and then seriously questioned by the Director of the Research Institute on Communist Affairs at Columbia University, in an article recently published in the excellent alumni journal, "Columbia University Forum."

The director, Prof. Brzezinski, states:

"The evolution of the two sys-

tems (American and Russian) — not their convergence — seems to be the undramatic pattern for the future."

The professor raises a basic question and provides an answer:

"The Soviet leaders today are far more similar to their Western counterparts in clothing, in social behavior, even in aspiration, than they were 25 years ago. The same is true of the average Soviet citizen. In that sense there has been, and there will continue to be, a steady convergence of the West, and the East, including China. But the question is: Will it also reduce the political differences? This seems far less likely upon examination."

According to Dr. Brzezinski further prosperity will not bring freedom in Russian and in its captive colonies. He cites a clear example from the past:

"In an economic and technological sense, Essen under the Nazis was similar to Detroit, yet the similarity did not stop the Nazis from imposing an entirely different political system . . . Indeed, it is the advance in techniques of economic control and coordination that makes possible for the first time both further economic development and the retention of Communist ideology."

In a nutshell, the Communist dictatorships in Russia or Cuba or Czechoslovakia or any country where economic and political freedom are gone will not "wither away" as "prosperity" increases for the common man.

Here is a glimpse into the future in Russia, according to the planners there, as indicated in the article:

"Affluent collectivism is to be the mode . . . Cars will be pooled, and so will rest homes; people will live in 'communal palaces,' each of which will house about 2,000 people; they will eat together, attend boarding schools from early childhood, and enjoy free, state - provided social facilities, such as transportation, housing, meals, social services, and even clothing. These are serious projections, and Soviet planners estimate that many of them will be implemented between 1975 and 2000."

Question: Will the Communist leaders of such a bee-hive society be less likely to strive for political domination of Europe and Asia and America?

There are many thoughtful citizens among us who think not.

EDWARD J. SLOANE
Chairman, Northern Virginia Liberal Arts Committee